REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 9, 20, and 37 have been amended.

Claims 8, 10-19, 38, and 44-59 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Claims 1-7, 9, 20-37, 39-43, and 60-67 are currently pending in this application.

Claims 1, 20, 29, 37, and 60 are in independent format.

1. Restriction Under 35 U.S.C. § 121

The Examiner has requested that Applicant restrict the claims in the invention to one of four inventions, identified as Group (I) Claims 1-7, 20-43, and 60 drawn to a mounting flange; Group (II) Claims 8 and 16-19 drawn to a method for a centering cone; Group (III) Claims 9-15 drawn to a centering cone; and Group (IV) Claims 44-59 drawn to a mounting pin.

Applicant hereby elects to proceed with the invention identified as Group (I), consisting of original Claims 1-7, 20-43, and 60, drawn to a mounting flange. Applicant has amended original Claim 9 to depend from Claim 2, and hence considered amended claim 9 to be further included in the claims of Group (I). Similarly, all newly added claims are directed towards a mounting flange or mounting flange system, and are believed to fall within Group (I).

Applicant has cancelled Claim 38, which was considered part of Group (I) as identified by the Examiner.

2. Election Under 35 U.S.C. § 121

The Examiner has stated that the application contains claims directed to the following distinct species of the claimed invention:

Species (I), as illustrated in Figures 5-7 and 16;

Species (II), as illustrated in Figures 9, 10, 13, and 14; and

Species (III), as illustrated in Figure 12.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's statements that the species are not patentably distinct with respect to Species I and II. The embodiments of the present invention illustrated in Figures 5-7 and 16 (Species I) and Figures 9, 10, 13, and 14 (Species II), are each directed towards a mounting flange assembly utilized to facilitate mounting of a vehicle wheel having an axial pilot hole and a plurality of radially spaced lug holes in an axially centered configuration about the spindle shaft of a vehicle wheel balancer. Each mounting flange assembly illustrated in the figures is configured to cooperate with a set of mounting pins each having a contact tip adapted to engage the lug holes of the vehicle wheel. The mounting flange assemblies shown in the figures of Species (I) and (II) are each configured to provide infinite radial adjustment to the positions of the mounting pin contact tips between minimum and maximum radial dimensions, enabling the mounting flange assembly to engage a wide variety of vehicle wheel lug hole configurations.

Specifically, the mounting flange assemblies shown in the figures of Species (I) are configured to provide infinite radial adjustment to the positions of the contact tips of mounting pins engaged with the flange plate by simultaneously sliding each mounting pin radially inward or outward in response to rotational displacement between the front and rear flange plates. (See: Para. [0056] – [0057]).

Similarly, the mounting flange assemblies shown in the figures of Species (II), when utilized in conjunction with mounting pins having radially compliant contact tips, are configured to provide infinite radial adjustment to the positions of the contact tips by

providing a plurality of discrete detent positions within which the mounting pins may be disposed, such that the range of radial compliance between contact tips on a mounting pin disposed in radially adjacent detent positions overlap to provide a continuous or infinite range of adjustment between the radially innermost and radially outermost detent positions for the mounting pins. (See: Para. [0068] and [0078]).

Currently, Claim 1 is believed to be generic between Species (I) and (II). Accordingly, the embodiments of the present invention illustrated in Figures 5-7 and 16 (Species I) and Figures 9, 10, 13, and 14 (Species II), are each directed towards a mounting flange assembly configured to provide infinite radial adjustment to the positions of the mounting pin contact tips between minimum and maximum radial dimensions, enabling the mounting flange assembly to engage a wide variety of vehicle wheel lug hole configurations, and as such, are not patentably distinct.

In the event Applicant's arguments set forth above are deemed persuasive, Applicant elects to proceed with the combination of Species (I) and (II), consisting of original claims: 1-7, 9, 20-35, 37, 39-43, and 60, as well as new claims 61-67.

In the event Applicant's arguments set forth above are <u>not</u> deemed persuasive, Applicant elects to proceed with Species (I), consisting of original claims: 1-3, 9, and 20-28, as well as new claims 61-64.

<u>3. New Claims</u>

New dependent Claims 61-64 depend from independent Claim 1, and correspond to an embodiment of the present invention shown in Figures 5-7 and 16.

New dependent Claims 65-67 depend from independent Claim 1, and correspond to an embodiment of the present invention shown in Figures 9, 10, 13, and 14, further emphasizing the generic nature of independent Claim 1 with regards to the Examiner's identified Species (I) and (II) inventions discussed above.

4. Conclusion

Based on the foregoing, the allowance of the remaining elected claims together with the newly added claims is requested.

If for any reason the Examiner is unable to allow the application on the next Office Action and feels that an interview would be helpful to resolve any remaining issues, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney for the purpose of arranging such an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

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